Be on the Cover of AG Magazine! ★ Contest Details Inside

American Girl™

November/December 2005
$4.50



15 Christmas Crafts to Make

Solve Mini Mysteries

217 Holiday Stickers

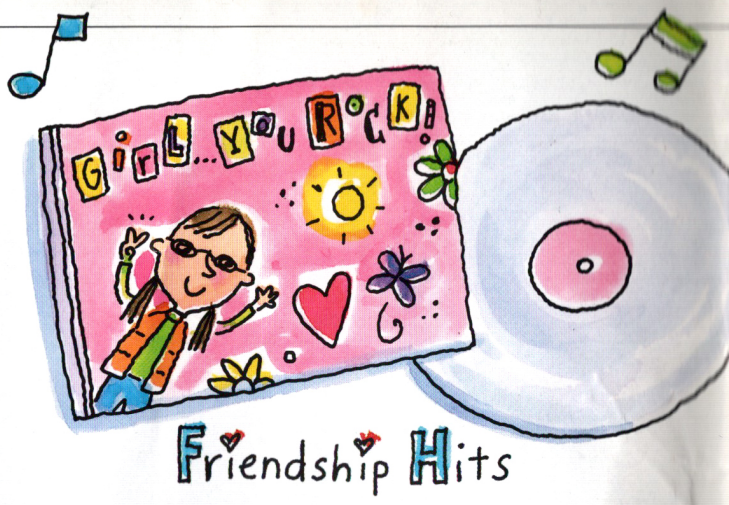
PLUS! Cute animal posters for your room!

American Girl™

Volume 13, Number 6

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See AG Online!
Visit americangirl.com to peek behind the scenes of AG magazine!
Always get a parent's permission before surfing the Web or giving out your full name, address, or any other personal info.



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Friendship Hits



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AG's Cover Contest
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About the Cover

Meet Zoe S., age 9. We asked her questions about the holidays.

Do you like making presents or buying them?

Making them. I made a family poster for my mom. She loved it!

Would you rather get lots of little presents or one big present?

Lots of little presents.

What's your favorite stocking stuffer?

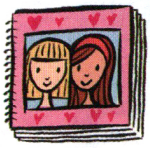
Candy!

Zoe S.

To see more pictures from our photo shoot, go to "Behind the Scenes" on page 49.

Cover photo: Steven Talley

Letters from You



Write On!

Thank you so much for the "Beat the Blahs" ideas in the July/August 2005 issue. My favorite idea from the article was to make a "Pass It On" journal. I made a "Sisterhood Journal" and sent it to my friend, who will send it to another friend. It's fun!

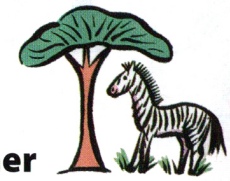
Johanna W.
Age 12, Ohio



Pool Pals

I loved the "Get Wet" games in the July/August issue. I had a pool party to celebrate the beginning of summer, and my friends loved the ideas!

Dianna F.
Age 11, New York



Wild Summer

I was excited to read Emma's story about living in Tanzania in the July/August issue. One of my best friends is moving there for a year. I was wondering what it would be like for her there, and this article helped me.

Vicki R. :-)
Age 13, Massachusetts



Write to Us!

Want to drop us a line? Write us at:

***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

You can also send letters via e-mail to im_agmag_editor@americangirl.com. Either way, be sure to include your first and last name and your birth date. We can't print every letter we receive, but we read and learn from each one.

Win It!

On page 29, you'll read about our latest Win It! contest. To enter, send a postcard by December 15 with your first and last name and address to:

Win It!—N/D 05
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



Official Rules

1. Employees of American Girl and its affiliates and their families are not eligible.
2. Only one entry per family.
3. To be valid, all entries must be received by mail by December 15, 2005. Entries may not be faxed or e-mailed.
4. All entries become the property of American Girl and will not be returned.
5. Void where prohibited by law.

Illustrations: Mary Lynn Blasutta

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Winner of a 2005 Parents' Choice Silver Award

The National Magazine Awards Finalist

American Girl™

Girls EXPRESS

You Can!

The holidays are a great time to think about all the things you can do to make life better for yourself, your friends and family, and even the world. Here's a list to help you get started now.

- I can try to learn one new thing every day.
- I can help out without being asked.
- I can set a goal—and work toward it.
- I can be the one who smiles first.
- I can keep my cool under pressure.
- I can love the things that make me different.
- I can be someone I admire.



Sign American Girl's "I Can" promise and wear your "I Can" band as a symbol of your pledge to become all you can be. Your participation helps other girls, too! To learn more, go to americangirl.com.

Did You Know?

You'll flip for these fun facts!

Spread the Word

The average American kid will eat 1,500 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches before she graduates from high school. Celebrate the PB&J in November, which is National Peanut Butter Lovers' Month.

Buzzword

gobbledygook

How to say it: GAH-buhl-dee-gook

What it means: Unclear, wordy language

One way to use it: Rachel translated her little sister's gobbledygook into a letter that Santa could read.



The buzzword is tucked into this issue of *American Girl*. Can you find it? The answer is on page 44.

Find It!

Look for fun facts sprinkled throughout the magazine!

Photo: Steven Talley Styling: Pam Retelle Illustrations: Tracey Wood

Winter Night

snowflakes falling

sparkling bright

crystals floating

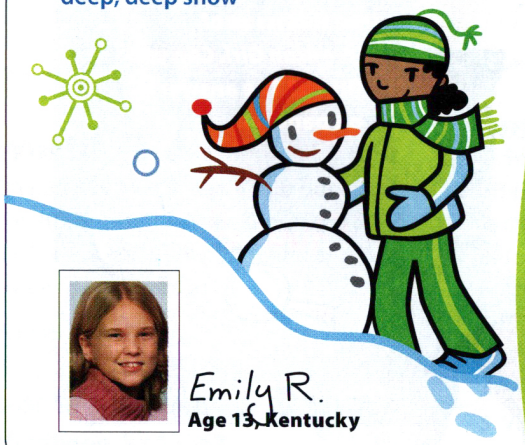
down at night

towns lit up

with lights aglow

filling up with

deep, deep snow



Emily R.
Age 13, Kentucky

True Stories

Lucky

Dear American Girl,

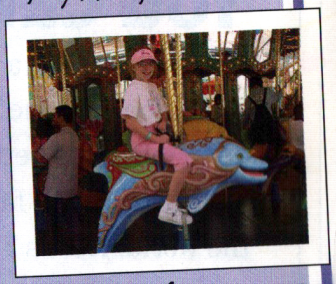
One November, my parents told me that my dad was going on a business trip to California and that we were going to the airport to watch his plane take off. My siblings and I were surprised to see that he had packed six suitcases, but he just told us that he needed lots of clothes because it would be a long trip.

When we got to the airport, my dad pulled out the tickets. There was one for each of us—to go to Disneyland! I thought it was a joke, but my mom said she and my dad had secretly packed our clothes the night before while my brother, my sister, and I were watching a movie.

We had so much fun! I think I said "Thank you" to my parents about 20 times. I have no idea how they kept that secret!

Sincerely,

Bethany W.
Age 13, Oregon



The trip was a few years ago, but it's a great memory!

Luckier

Dear American Girl,

One December, my mom took our two cats to the vet's office for their shots. She took one cat inside, and when she went back to the car for our other cat, she saw that Dusty was missing! My mom searched everywhere, but she came home with only one cat. I cried when she told me, and I was so worried about Dusty.

Three weeks later, Dusty still hadn't been found, but we had to leave for our Christmas vacation. I was worried, but I hadn't lost hope. When we got home from our trip, we got a phone call from my mom's friend, whose neighbor had found Dusty! Our cat had kind of moved in with the neighbor's family—including their two dogs! Dusty came home to us a month after she disappeared, and it was truly a Christmas miracle.

Sincerely,

Gigi G.
Age 14, Illinois



Gigi and Dusty





Very Lucky

Dear American Girl,

It was Christmas Eve, and my mom and I were headed home from my grandma's house. It was snowing hard, and as we were driving, my mom saw a stopped truck and a man waving his arms frantically. My mom slowed down, but the SUV behind us didn't. We were rear-ended, hard, on the icy road. We ended up on the side of the road, almost in the ditch, and the SUV that hit us drove away.

Our cell phone wasn't working, and our car was totaled. But right then, a minivan pulled up with a family and their dog. We put our stuff in their van, and they let us call my stepdad. When they dropped us off at a restaurant to wait for our ride, they gave us a $20 bill for food, wished us a Merry Christmas, and left.

We never knew who those people were, but their generosity was the best Christmas present ever.

Sincerely,

Alexandra O.
Age 13, Michigan





Luckiest

Dear American Girl,

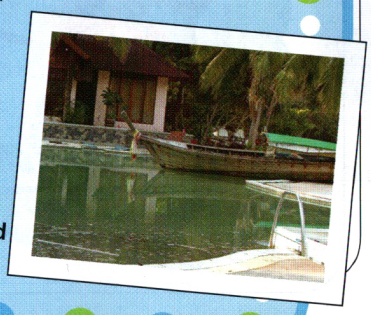
My family was celebrating Christmas on vacation in Thailand last winter. Our beach resort was beautiful. One day, as we were getting ready to go out snorkeling, we heard screams. I panicked and ran to the beach with everyone else. That's when I saw the tsunami.

Water started rushing up, and my family ran, barefoot, for higher ground. We reached another resort high in the hills to wait out the disaster. Later, when we returned to our resort, we saw the destruction. Ocean taxi boats were stuck in trees and in the pool. The Internet café I used earlier that day was ruined, but my family was safe. I almost felt guilty that I was alive with only some scratches while some families lost everything.

If we had chosen a different beach for snorkeling that day, we might not have made it home. A lot of people died in the tsunami, and I feel really thankful that I'm here to tell about it.

Sincerely,

Dylan R.
Age 14, Texas



An ocean taxi boat washed into a swimming pool.

Cut out your answer and mail it to us with your first and last name, address, and birth date.

Creative Corner



Frosty Topper

Cut out card.
Flip over for directions.

AG Poll

In our July /August issue, we asked you what you liked best about a break from school. Here's how you voted:



472
No homework

287
Later bedtime

76
No need to get dressed for school

Next question:

On April Fools' Day, would you rather play a prank on someone or have someone play a prank on you? Circle your choice.

* "I got you!"
* "You got me!"



American Girl™

Frosty Topper

Make dessert merry with this marshmallow snowman. Use frosting to attach two large marshmallows end to end. Attach candy sprinkle eyes and buttons and a mini chocolate chip nose with frosting. Use colored gel frosting to make the mouth. Wrap a thin strand of red licorice around the middle for a scarf. Place your snowman in a dish of ice cream.

Photo: Jamie Young

Help Wanted!

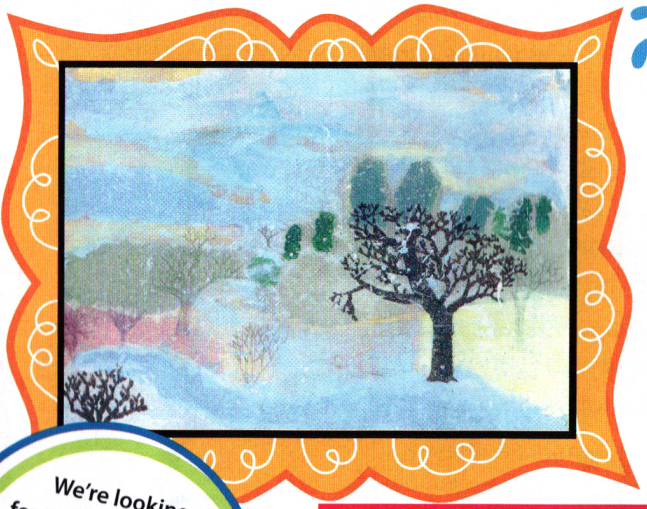
Every girl loves her friends, but some friends go way above and beyond the call of duty. Do you have a friend who has helped you through a really tough time? Has your bud stood up for you, given you great advice, or even saved your life? Write to us about your first-rate friend, and send your letter to the address on page 2.



AG Art Gallery

Check out this art sent in by AG readers like you.







Roxolana S.
Age 13, Wisconsin

We're looking for **artwork** for our gallery. Send **color** copies of your original artworks to the address on page 2. **Sorry,** we can't return entries.





Meara K.
Age 13, Massachusetts





Collyn A.
Age 12, Colorado

Shining Stars

Chelsea S. and Angela B.'s charity cookbook project turned out to be a recipe for happiness. The Ohio girls cooked up a plan to make and sell cookbooks to raise money and earn awards in Girl Scouts.

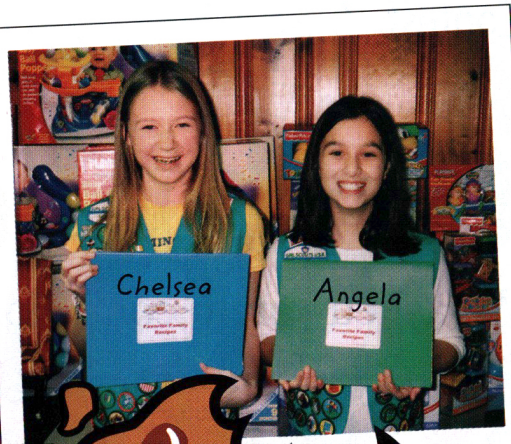
They collected recipes from people at Chelsea's church, sorted the recipes into categories, typed them into the computer, designed the pages, and assembled the cookbooks into folders.

The girls sold more than 250 books and raised about $800, which they used to buy Christmas toys and blankets for needy children.

"We bought different kinds of gifts—just a whole bunch of stuff," says Angela, age 13.

Both girls earned their Scout awards. The project took several months to complete, but Chelsea says it was all worth it.

"It just really felt good putting all my time into that," the 13-year-old says. "I love helping my community. It just gives me something—just happiness."



You can shine, too.
If your school or church is planning a charity bake sale, make an item to donate.

Lunch Box

These yummy mix-ins can help turn vanilla yogurt into a holiday treat.



Fake Flakes

Can you guarantee a white Christmas with this artificial snow? We asked a reader to check it out.

"Super Snow reminds me of real snow, but it doesn't melt. I even packed it into a snowball! We had to mix the 'snow' and water for longer than the directions said to, but it was really fun."



★★★★★

Charlotte B.
Age 9, Kansas





Super Snow
$7.99 each

Photos: Mike Walker, Jamie Young

Gobble, Gobble!

We asked you to come up with Thanksgiving lyrics to "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Here are the winners!

When the Pilgrims Came

When the Pilgrims came to stay,
They had trouble every day.
Thankfully the Indians came,
Showed them how to harvest grain.
We want to give thanks to them.
We have had big feasts since then!



Abigail B.
Age 11, Connecticut

Ode to Pie

Apple, cherry, pumpkin, too,
All these pies with cream will do.
Dished up with a cup of tea,
Fills my face with joy and glee.
At your next Thanksgiving do
Count dessert a blessing, too!



Grace S.
Age 13, Minnesota

Last Thanksgiving

Last Thanksgiving wasn't great.
Spot jumped onto Grandpa's plate,
Ate up turkey, yams, and corn,
Leaving Grandpa quite forlorn.
Now we keep Spot far away
From our table on that day.



Emily B.
Age 10, Michigan

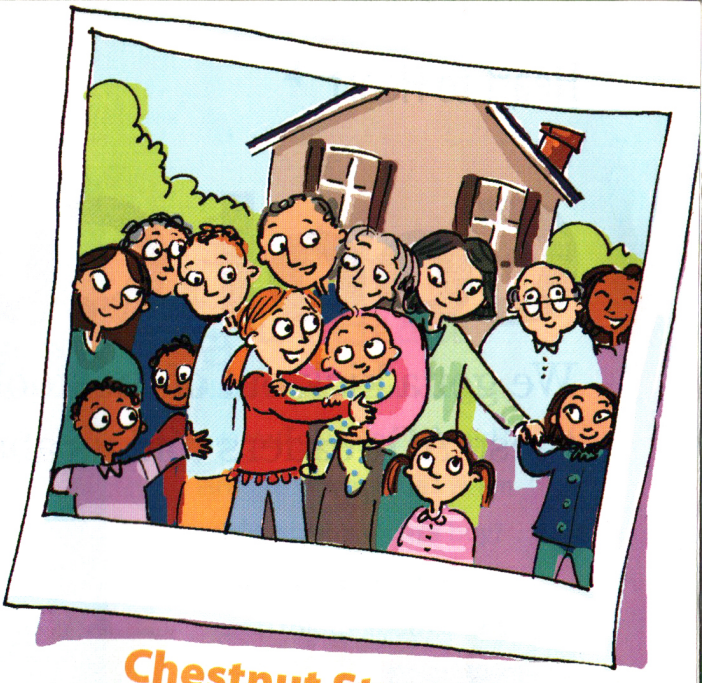
Photos: Jamie Young Illustrations: Lauren Scheuer

Yummy, Yummy

Yummy, yummy, pumpkin pie,
I wish you weren't up so high.
Up atop the fridge you sit.
I just want a little bit.
Yummy, yummy, pumpkin pie,
I wish you weren't up so high.



Morghan K.
Age 11, Washington



Chestnut Street

Going down to Chestnut Street,
A Thanksgiving feast we'll eat.
Greeting cousins, greeting friends,
The line of tables never ends.
Eating, laughing, hugging, kissing,
Then for weeks I'm reminiscing.



Rebecca D.
Age 13, California

Turkey Troubles

For me Thanksgiving's unfair.
Hunters give me quite a scare.
I'm a turkey, you can see.
Please eat chicken and not me.
For me Thanksgiving's unfair.
Hunters give me quite a scare.



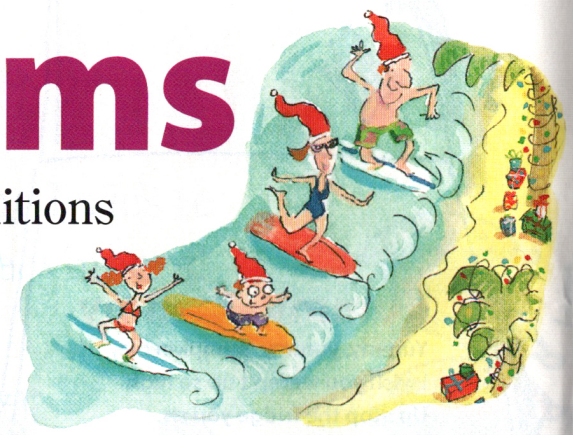
Lindsey F.
Age 10, Oregon

New Contest: Desk-drawer creatures

Create a critter using erasers, pencils, paper clips, or any other school supplies you have. Send your creation to the address on page 2, along with your first and last name, address, and birth date. Deadline: December 10, 2005. Winners will appear in the May/June 2006 issue. Sorry, we can't return entries.

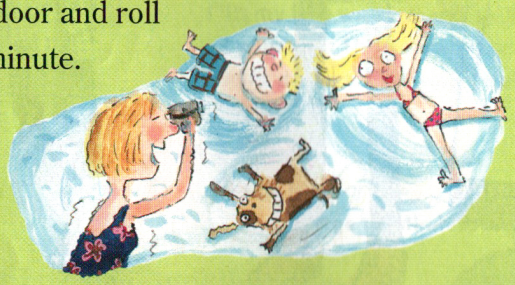
Cool Customs

We got a kick out of the kooky holiday traditions these AG readers told us about!





When there's a lot of snow, my family and I put on our swimsuits and roll around in it! Somebody grabs the video camera and shouts "GO!" and we run out the door and roll around in the snow for a minute. After we dry off, we watch the video and laugh!



Kori T.
Age 10, Utah



When the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve, my family throws money in the air—quarters, dimes, and nickels! It's an old Philippine tradition that is supposed to bring you a rich and prosperous year. It's a lot of fun!

Megan L.
Age 12, Idaho



My family is Jewish, so we don't celebrate Christmas. One year we went to a Chinese restaurant for dinner on Christmas Day because it was the only place open. Now, we always have cashew chicken and fried rice that day.

Jamie B.
Age 11, Indiana



Every year for Thanksgiving, my family has a turkey march. My mom plays the bagpipes and we all walk behind my grandpa, who holds the turkey. We march all around the house and it's really fun.

Rheva M.
Age 12, Washington





My family's unique tradition is that we go to Florida every year for Christmas. We listen to Christmas music by the pool and enjoy all of the decorations. Plus, it's fun to swim in December.

Madison S.
Age 13, Alabama



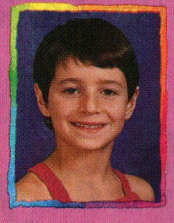
Since my birthday is on Christmas Day, we set apart my gifts. I still get some Christmas presents, but my birthday presents go under a "birthday tree," decorated with snowmen!

Sydney U.
Age 10, New Jersey



Big Truth

Fun memories make holidays special.



Every New Year's Day, my family eats "lucky pudding." It started a few years ago when we had chocolate and vanilla pudding on New Year's Day in a restaurant. We ended up having a very lucky year!

Sophia P.
Age 9, Washington, D.C.



My family is very healthy. So instead of setting out cookies and milk for Santa on Christmas Eve, we leave a nutrition bar, an apple, and a glass of water for him. It's a little too healthy if you ask me!

Hannah K.
Age 12, California

Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: Being a girl. Are you glad you're a girl? Are there ever times when you wish you were a boy? What are the best (and worst) things about being a girl?

Send answers, name, birth date, and school photo to the address on page 2. Deadline: December 7, 2005. Some answers will appear in the May/June 2006 issue. ★



Illustrations: Laura Cornell

Last time we did a cover contest, we received more than 6,800 entries!





AG's Cover Contest

If **you** worked at *American Girl,* what would you put in the magazine? We're looking for your **best** ideas. Can you **dream up** an article we should write? **Draw** a comic strip for girls? Or **invent** a new section of the magazine? The more original your **magazine** idea is, the better! Fill out the form on the next page, turn it over, and use the space on the back to **tell us** about your idea. You can use **words, photos, drawings,** or just about anything to get your idea across. Then cut out the page and send it in.

wow! great girls

You could spend a day with the AG staff as a **guest editor**—and be on the **cover!**

American Girl Cover Contest Official Rules

1. No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited by law. Open only to girls ages 8 to 13 as of contest deadline.

2. How to enter:

We want your best new idea for *American Girl* magazine. Fill out the form at right and use the back to describe your idea in words, photos, and/or drawings. Please do not send ideas for new American Girl products. Your finished entry must fit on the back of the form at right. Send your entry, along with your first and last name, address, phone number, birth date, and recent school photo, to Cover Contest, *American Girl* magazine, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562. Limit one entry per person. Entries must be postmarked by December 15, 2005. Contest entries become the property of American Girl, Inc., and will not be returned. Entries submitted without photos will be considered incomplete and will be disqualified. All entries must be submitted through the mail. E-mailed or faxed entries will not be considered. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, damaged, delayed, destroyed, misdirected, incomplete, illegible, or postage-due entries/mail.

3. Winner selection:

Winners will be selected on the basis of idea creativity, originality, and presentation. By participating, entrants agree to be bound by the Official Rules and by the decisions of the judges, which are final and binding in all matters relating to this contest. Winners will be required to execute an Affidavit of Eligibility and Liability/Publicity release (except where prohibited), which must be signed, notarized, and returned to American Girl within 14 days of attempted delivery of same. Noncompliance with this condition will result in forfeiture of the prize and an alternate winner being selected. Winners will be notified by mail. If prize notification is returned as undeliverable, the prize will be forfeited and will be awarded to an alternate winner. Prizes won by minors will be awarded in minor's name to parent or legal guardian, who must sign and return all required documents.

Rules continued on next page.

Illustrations Keri Smith

American Girl™

I want to see my idea in AG magazine and be on the cover!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Attach school photo or snapshot here

Phone number: (_____) _____

Birth date: _____

I came up with this idea myself.

Signature: _____

Yes, this is my daughter's own idea.

Parent's signature: _____

Use the other side of this page to describe your idea for *American Girl* magazine. Then cut it out and send it to:

Cover Contest
American Girl magazine
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562
Deadline: December 15, 2005

Contest entry must fit on the back of this page. Sorry, entry will not be returned!

My new idea for *American Girl* magazine is...

Official Rules, continued

4. Eligibility:

Employees, officers, and directors of American Girl, Inc., and its parent and affiliated companies and their immediate families (parents, children, siblings, spouse), regardless of where they live, and/or persons residing in the same household of each of the above (whether related or not) are not eligible to participate or win a prize. Contest is open only to girls ages 8 to 13 as of contest deadline.

5. Prizes/Approximate retail value:

One to six winners will receive a trip to an *American Girl* magazine cover photo shoot and will appear on the cover of the November/December 2006 issue of *American Girl* magazine. Each winner and one parent or legal guardian per winner will receive round-trip coach air transportation from the major gateway airport nearest winner's residence to Chicago, Illinois, or reimbursement of expenses for driving to Chicago, Illinois, at sponsor's option; three nights of hotel accommodations; and all meals and ground transportation for the duration of the trip, not to exceed four days and three nights. Winners must be available for travel during July 2006, specific dates to be determined. By accepting the prize, winner and her parent or legal guardian consent to the use of her name, photo, and/or likeness for advertising and trade purposes in connection with *American Girl* magazine without additional compensation, except where prohibited. All taxes on the prize will be the responsibility of the winners. No substitutions or cash redemption of the prize are allowed. Prizes are non-transferable. Approximate retail value of each prize: $3,000.

6. General:

By accepting the prize, winner releases American Girl, Inc., Pleasant Company Publications, Mattel, Inc., and their respective advertising, promotion, and provider companies and each of their respective officers, directors, agents, and employees from any and all liabilities with respect to the prize. This contest is sponsored by American Girl, Inc., 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562. ★



Quiz

What's Your Friend's Style?





Circle the answers that describe your friend best. Then turn the page to see which gift you can make for her to match her style!

1. You and your friend are at the mall. Suddenly she spots her perfect outfit, which is …

a. a flowing skirt with a paisley peasant top.

b. exercise pants and a zip-up hoodie.

c. flare jeans with rhinestones on the pockets.

d. black corduroy pants with a bright blue top.



2. Your friend's favorite hairstyle is …

a. low braids.

b. a ponytail—anything that keeps it out of her face.

c. pulled back with sparkly barrettes.

d. a funky updo that she just saw in a magazine.



3. After school you can usually find your friend …

a. making crafts.

b. ice-skating, sledding, or doing anything active.

c. listening to her favorite CDs.

d. talking on the phone.

4. If your friend could have lunch with a famous person, who would she choose?

a. Anne Hathaway

b. Mia Hamm

c. Hilary Duff

d. Raven Symoné

5. Your friend's dream bedroom would be …

a. filled with flowers.

b. filled with posters of her favorite sports star.

c. full of everything shiny and sparkly.

d. a burst of color—orange, pink, and turquoise!

6. If your friend were invited to a costume party, she would go as …

a. a hippie.

b. a sports star.

c. a rock star.

d. a famous actress.



Count how many of each letter you circled to find your friend's style.

A's	B's	C's	D's

Now turn the page to see a craft that would be perfect to make for your friend!

Answers

Which bracelet will your friend like best? If you had a tie for answers, that means you have more choices!



Photos: Mike Walker Illustrations: Lynn Gesue

Mostly A's

Dainty Girl

Your friend likes pretty things, and this dainty bracelet will make her smile! Cut an 8-inch piece of clear elastic cord. String on a flower shank button and tie in place. Continue to string flowers, tying each one in place. Finish by tying the string in a double knot. Add a dab of clear nail polish to the string to secure knot. Let dry.

Mostly B's

Sporty Sister

Your friend loves being active, so make her a bracelet that won't get in the way. Attach rhinestones to a rubber bracelet with tacky glue. Let dry.

Mostly C's

In the Spotlight

Your friend loves to perform, so make her this bracelet that stands out in a crowd.

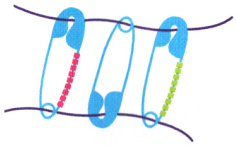
YOU WILL NEED

- 80 1-inch-long safety pins
- Variety of beads (make sure they fit on a safety pin)
- 2 12-inch pieces of elastic cord
- Clear nail polish

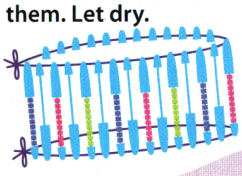
1 Open a safety pin carefully and place beads on the open end. Close pin. Repeat with 39 more pins.



2 Begin stringing pins on elastic cords. Rotate the direction of each pin, alternating beaded ones and plain ones as shown.



3 After the bracelet is strung, tie ends of cords in double knots. Trim any excess cord. Apply a dab of clear nail polish on the knots to secure them. Let dry.



Mostly D's

Funky Friend

Your bold friend will love this trendy cuff. Cut a strip of felt 2 inches wide by 8 inches long. Attach self-adhesive Velcro to ends so the bracelet closes. Squeeze a dab of glue under each piece of Velcro for extra hold. Use glue to attach a fun appliqué. Let dry. ★





Super Stars

Meet four girls in the spotlight.



Meet Shailene

This actress brings the American Girl character Felicity to life in a new movie!

Shailene W. got to travel back in time to make her latest movie, *Felicity: An American Girl Adventure*. The movie is set in 1775 in Williamsburg, Virginia, just before the Revolutionary War in which America won freedom from England. Shailene plays Felicity Merriman, a girl who fights for what she believes in while her family and friends take sides in the war.

The California girl has made more than 20 commercials and has had parts in movies and on TV shows, but becoming Felicity was no small thing. Shailene had to dye her brown hair red like Felicity's. She wore fancy historical costumes and spent several weeks learning about life in Felicity's era.

"I got to dance the minuet. And then I also had to learn etiquette—how to sit down properly, how to walk properly, how to drink tea properly, although Felicity is kind of the opposite of etiquette," Shailene says.

Felicity is spunky and adventuresome. Shailene took riding lessons to help her become Felicity, who tries to help a spirited horse that is abused by her owner. Shailene learned how to ride bareback, which is how Felicity rides Penny in secret, and sidesaddle, which was the proper form for girls at the time.

Shailene says it was interesting to see what life was like for girls in Felicity's time. "Girls were supposed to be gentlewomen. And when they turned 10, they had to go to gentlewoman classes. Gentlewoman classes would teach them how to serve tea, how to sew, how to write properly. It would be like school. That's very different from girls today because you know girls today can do everything that boys can," she says.

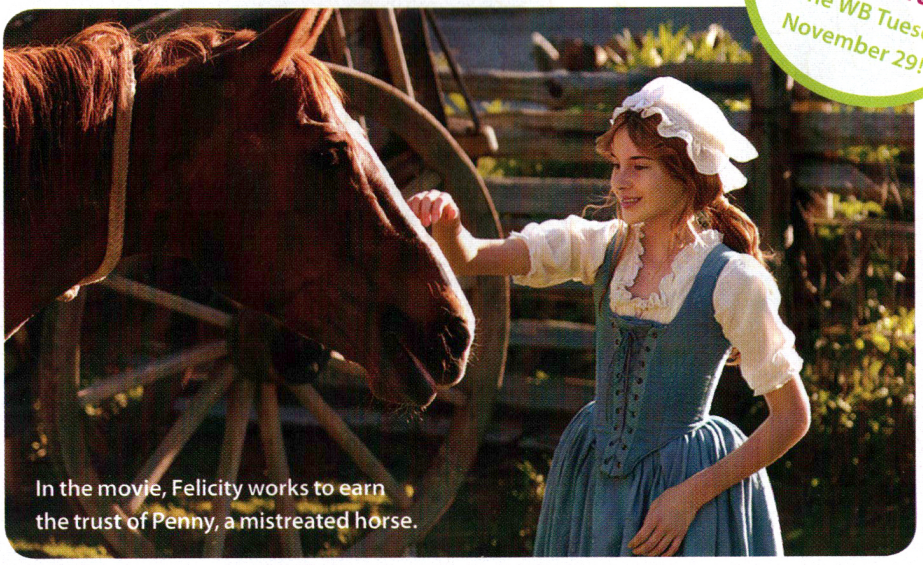
Shailene says she loved playing Felicity. "She doesn't hurt anyone's feelings, but she fights for what she believes in. She's so independent, and if I had the chance to be her friend today, I would."



Shailene says the Felicity costumes helped her imagine life long ago.

Photos: Brooke Palmer

Watch ***Felicity: An American Girl Adventure*** on The WB Tuesday, November 29!



In the movie, Felicity works to earn the trust of Penny, a mistreated horse.

Meet Kassandra

She helped sick kids on a reality TV show and got a new house for her family, too!

It was tough enough for Kassandra O. to battle a dangerous form of cancer. The dreary hospital room where she stayed for months did nothing to lift her spirits. "The rooms were white and boring," Kassandra explains.

When the 9-year-old Arizona girl got out of the hospital, she sent a videotape to the TV show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.* But instead of asking the show to make over her home, Kassandra requested a makeover for the kids' hospital rooms. "If I had had colors in my room, it would have made me happier," she says.

Extreme Makeover granted Kassandra's wish. The show sent Kassandra's family to the hospital to watch a talented team of artists paint colorful murals in the rooms.

But the surprise didn't end there. While Kassandra's family was away for a week to see the work at the hospital, *Extreme Makeover* secretly tore down their house and built a huge new one in its place! It was the first time the show knocked down a family's house and built another house without the family knowing. "When I saw it, it was amazing," Kassandra gushes.

Her favorite part of her new house is the bead studio, where she handcrafts necklaces and bracelets to raise money to fight cancer. "I have at least one hundred different kinds of beads," Kassandra says.

Her new bedroom is a blooming beauty. *Extreme Makeover* host Ty Pennington created a garden in Kassandra's room, complete with butterflies and gigantic flowers. Kassandra and her five siblings are also wild about their new home movie theater, which has a huge screen.

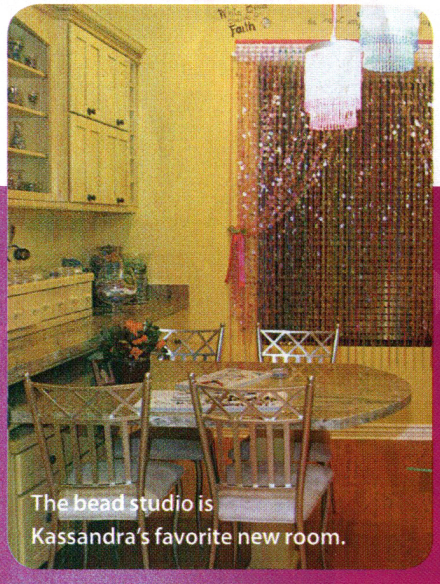
While her new house is delightful, Kassandra is proudest of the newly colorful rooms at the children's hospital. "It makes me feel good to help other kids," she says. "I know they'll feel better to be in these rooms!"

To learn more about Kassandra's bead project, visit **lovecomesfirst.com.**



The show built a carousel in the family's backyard!

Photos: ABC/Sandy Baker



The bead studio is Kassandra's favorite new room.



Kassandra's new bedroom brings the outdoors inside.

Meet Chloe and Asya

These two sisters are touring the U.S. as the only members of their own rock band!

When Chloe and Asya's family was shopping at a music store one day, the sisters wandered into the drum section. Chloe ended up taking home a drum kit and began drumming along when Asya (pronounced OZ-ee-uh) played the keyboard and piano.

Chloe started taking drumming lessons, and when her teacher found out that Asya was a songwriter, he offered to work with both sisters. The girls wrote a few songs together and decided to form a band. They called the band Smoosh and gave away recordings through a family Web site.

Smoosh started playing their music for people in coffee shops in their Washington state hometown, and soon there were stories about the band in newspapers and magazines. The girls recorded a professional CD called *She Like Electric*. They appeared on TV shows and heard their songs played on the radio.

Since then, they have performed for big audiences across the country. Smoosh has done shows with world-famous bands and also played an outdoor concert at a festival that was attended by 25,000 people.

"We like when the crowd dances or claps," says Asya. "It means that they like the music, and it makes us go wild."

The girls' parents and two younger sisters come along when Smoosh travels to play music. They even got to go to Hawaii for two weeks to write songs that they hope will be on their next CD.

The band keeps the sisters busy, but playing music isn't all they do. They like to play soccer and hang out with friends. Asya, age 13, and Chloe, age 11, also want to do well in school, so they bring their homework to do on trips.

Smoosh has been successful in two years of performing, but Chloe says that any girl can be in a band. "As long as you can play music," she says, "it doesn't matter how old you are." ★



With Smoosh's CD, *She Like Electric*, Asya's artwork appears on the CD liner and lyric book.

Smoosh's song "Rad" is about people being afraid to try new things. "You can't worry about making mistakes," Asya says. "If you never take chances, nothing will ever happen."

Go to americangirl.com and click on "Magazine" to check out a Smoosh tune.



Asya is the lead vocalist and plays the keyboard.



Chloe is the band's drummer.

Photos: William Anthony

Thanks!

Getting gifts is almost always fun, but it can make for some tricky situations. Do you know the right way to thank someone?

by Nancy Holyoke



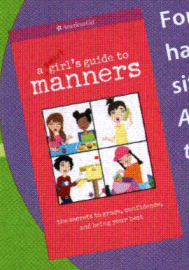
Q: Is it polite to send the same thank-you card to everyone and just fill the person's name in the blank?

A: Fill-in-the-blank thank-you cards make the people who get them feel like fill-in-the-blank friends. Write a real note to everyone. You can repeat some sentences from one note to the next, but you also should have some lines that are specially written for this gift and this giver.



Q: How about saying thank you when you see people, or calling them on the phone?

A: Saying thank you on the phone is nice, but it can't replace a handwritten note. Even if your friends are sitting all around you when you're opening your gifts, it's best to follow up that hurried spoken thank-you with a note. As for thanking family members for gifts they give, traditions vary in families. But there's one rule you can count on: it's safer to write the notes than to skip it.



For more tips on handling confusing situations, check out *A Smart Girl's Guide to Manners*, available in bookstores.

Q: It's a lot easier to say thank you in an e-mail than it is to say thank you in a note. There's nothing wrong with using a computer, is there?

A: It depends. Sending a nice thank-you electronically can be an acceptable way to thank a friend or cousin who goes online frequently—assuming that it's a real letter, not just a sentence that you dash off in a few seconds. But e-mail is a casual way to thank people. It's better to write a note and send it through the mail. This is especially true if the gift is very generous or if the giver spent a lot of time making it for you. A traditional thank-you is more personal and more gracious, so it means a lot more.

Q: If someone gives you a candy cane, do you send her a thank-you note?



A: Presents always deserve a thank-you note. The question is, if somebody hands you a candy cane, is that a "present"? Well, yes and no. If the item you're given is inexpensive, unwrapped, and given to you casually, then a warm, spoken "Thank you!" may be enough. If you have any doubt about whether a thank-you note is called for, ask your mom or dad.

Thank-You How-To

Not sure how to begin? These ideas can help you write a great thank-you note.

Talk
Talk about the gift for several sentences. Have you used it? Did someone else compliment you on it? Are there things about it that you particularly like?

Ask
Ask some questions about the person to whom you're writing. What's going on at her house? Show her that you care.

Dear Aunt Margo,

Thanks a lot for the sweater. I wore it to school on Tuesday and got a lot of compliments. Snails are the best! Who would have thought to put them on a sweater?

How are you and Uncle Mort? Has he finished the doghouse he was building for Bullwrinkle?

Dad has been elected secretary of the Iris Society. Mom got her cast off. Her leg is better, but she still walks with a limp. She says hi.

Thanks again for the great sweater. I'll really enjoy it.

Love,

Chrissy

Report
What's your news? Bring the gift giver up to date on a thing or two.

Say Thanks Again
Mention the gift a second time, just before you sign off. ★

Illustrations: Cathi Mingus

Winter Wonderland

Decorate everything from pencils to photo albums with a touch of the holiday season!

Candy Cane Forest

Make cute trees to top your candy canes! For each tree, fold a piece of felt in half and use pinking shears to cut a triangle shape. You will have two triangles that are the same size. Glue sides of tree together, leaving the bottom open. Let dry. Decorate tree by gluing on rhinestones, ribbons, and confetti, and by doodling with dimensional fabric paint. Let dry and slip in a candy cane.



Pencil Toppers

Decorate your pencils with these fun flakes. Cut a thin strip of felt 4 inches long. Squeeze a line of glue along the felt strip. Roll the felt around the pencil. Hold firmly for about one minute. Set aside and let dry. Attach a confetti snowflake and a rhinestone with glue. Let dry.



Jolly Jar

This pencil jar is as cute as can be! Cut a piece of sparkle felt to fit around a clean jar and glue in place. Decorate jar by gluing on felt triangle trees, rhinestones, and confetti. Let dry and fill with pens and pencils.



Winter Scene

Give a plain frame a cool look. Cut triangles from felt and attach them to the frame with glue. Add small rectangles for the tree trunks and a white felt "snowdrift." Glue in place and let dry. Add rhinestone stars to the top of trees with a dab of glue.



Let It Snow

Decorate your bulletin board with these tacks. Paint a wooden snowflake shape (available at craft stores). Let dry. Attach rhinestones using dimensional fabric paint. Let dry. Glue a flat-backed tack onto the back of the snowflake. Let dry.



Tiny Trees

Cut a small triangle from a thin piece of cardboard. Use a glue stick to cover the triangle with glue. Attach triangle to the back side of a piece of patterned paper. Trim off excess paper. Use glue to attach a rhinestone star. Glue on a pin back (available at craft stores). Let dry. Pin to a plain sweater for a touch of the holidays.

Snowflake Charm

Create a sparkly charm to accessorize your outfit. Use glue to attach a confetti snowflake onto a metal-rimmed tag (available at scrapbook and office supply stores). Glue a rhinestone to the center using a dot of dimensional fabric paint. Let dry. Thread the tag onto a necklace chain.





Tree Greetings

Add this adorable tree design to the front of any plain greeting card. Cut three triangles from a piece of felt or paper, overlapping them to make a tree as shown. Glue the triangles onto the card. Decorate the tree with dimensional fabric paint designs or by gluing on mini pom-poms and confetti. Lay flat until dry.



Merry Clip-mas

Paper clips have never been cuter! Use pinking shears to cut a piece of felt to fit on the front of a plain greeting card. Glue felt onto card. Squeeze a thick line of dimensional fabric paint down the center of the felt. Add paper clips to the paint to form a tree shape as shown. Add a confetti snowflake to top the tree. Let dry completely. Finish by using pinking shears to cut along the edges of the card.







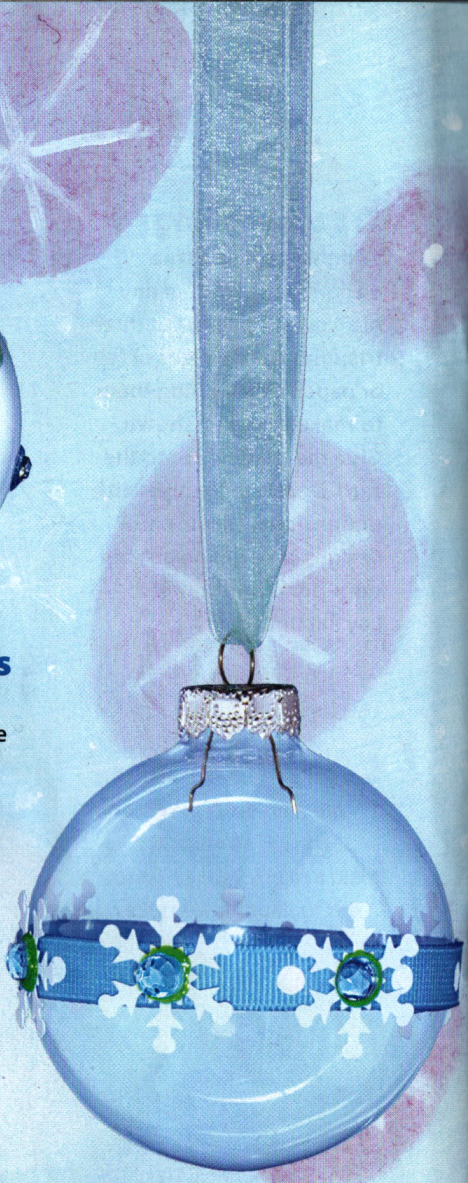
Sparkle Ball

Set a glass ball ornament in a small paper cup. Squeeze a small dot of jewel glue onto the ball. Press confetti snowflake into glue. Let dry. Repeat with more snowflakes. Place a dot of sparkly dimensional fabric paint in the center of each snowflake and add rhinestones. Leave the ball in the cup to dry.



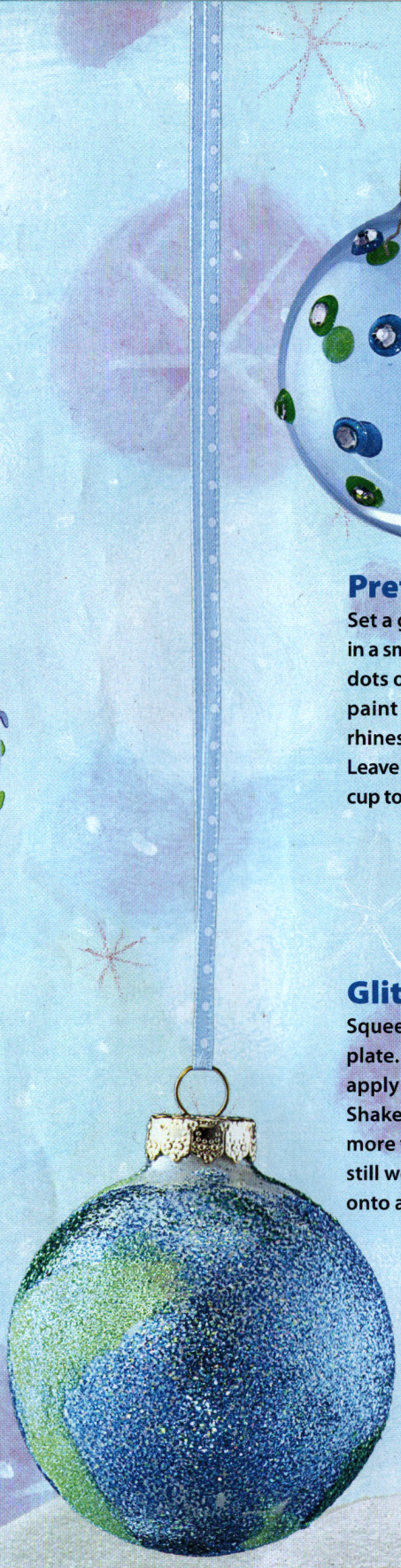
Pretty Polka Dots

Set a glass ball ornament in a small paper cup. Squeeze dots of dimensional fabric paint onto the ball. Push rhinestones into paint dots. Leave the ball in the cup to dry.



That's a Wrap

Set a glass ball ornament in a small paper cup. Glue a piece of ribbon around the center of the ball. Glue on confetti snowflakes. Use sparkly dimensional fabric paint in the center of each snowflake and add rhinestones. Leave the ball in the cup to dry.



Glittery Glam

Squeeze glue onto a paper plate. Use a paintbrush to apply glue to the ornament. Shake on glitter (one color or more than one!) while glue is still wet and tap excess off onto a paper plate. Let dry.

Remember to ask an adult to help you when decorating glass ornamants.



Holiday Album

Create a photo album for holiday memories.

1 Buy a photo album with a plastic or vinyl cover. Glue a ribbon along the bottom of the front cover. Use masking tape to tape off three triangles.

2 Squeeze fabric paint onto aluminum foil. Use a sponge brush to paint an even coat of paint inside the triangle areas. Carefully remove tape while paint is wet. Let dry.

3 Use dimensional fabric paint to decorate trees. Glue on rhinestones and confetti. Add a rhinestone star to the top of each tree. Fill with great photos!



Give a Gift

Use AG's Holiday Stickers to decorate your packages. Don't know what to give as a gift? Make one of these crafts!



Win It!

Win a box full of craft supplies to make some of the crafts you saw in "Winter Wonderland." Contest rules and information are on page 2.

Photos: Mike Walker Illustrations: Julie Monks Projects courtesy of Tulip® and Aleene's® for Duncan Enterprises Additional credits on page 2.

Friendship Matters

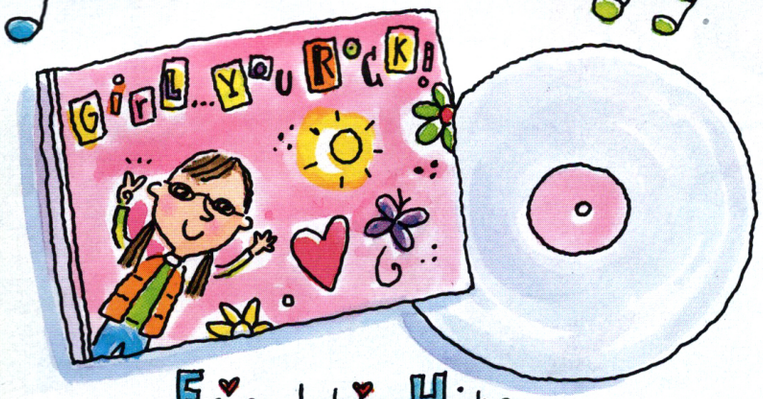
Here are 10 great ways to...

Be a Fantastic Friend



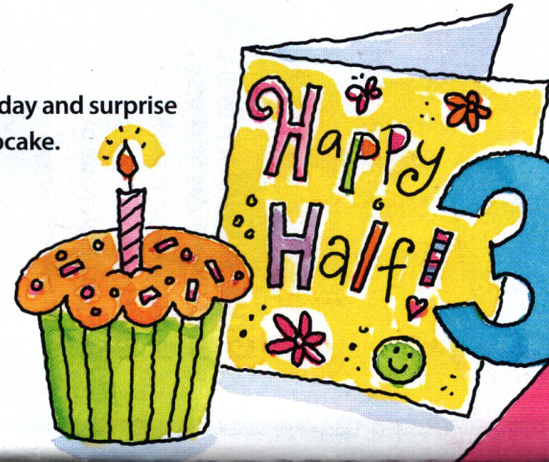
1 Chore Chum

Give your friend a coupon good for helping with one of her least favorite chores at home, such as folding laundry, cleaning her room, or washing the dishes.



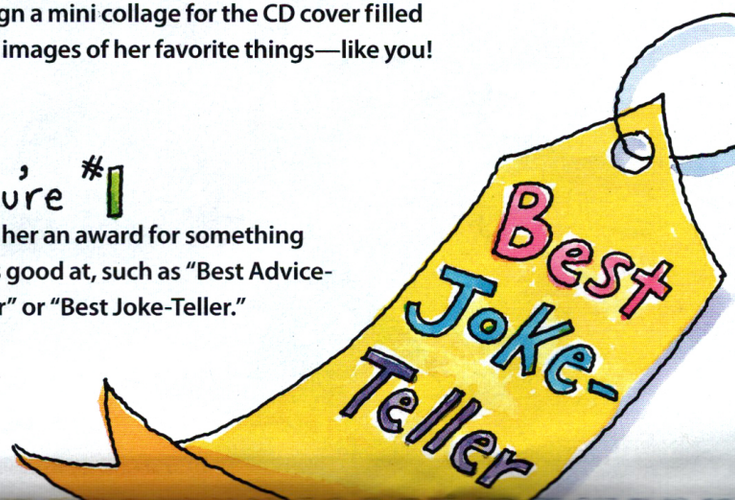
2 Friendship Hits

Make her a mix CD of all of her favorite songs. Design a mini collage for the CD cover filled with images of her favorite things—like you!



3 Happy Half

Figure out her half-birthday and surprise her with a card and a cupcake.



4 You're #1

Give her an award for something she's good at, such as "Best Advice-Giver" or "Best Joke-Teller."

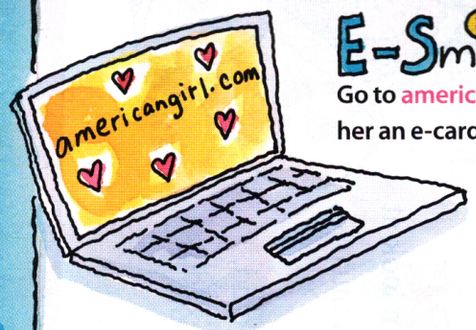
Friend Fairy

Write down all the reasons you love your friend on a piece of paper. Tuck the note under her pillow the next time you are at her house. She'll have a sweet surprise when she goes to bed.



E-Smiles

Go to americangirl.com and send her an e-card to brighten her day.



Ode to Friend

Use the letters in her name to write a poem about your friendship.



Lucky Bud

Give her a special good luck token—like a painted rock. Tell her to keep it in her pocket when you are apart and she'll always know you are close by.



Hip Hip Hooray!

Write a cheer for her! Then bring the cheer to her soccer match and yell it at the top of your lungs.



True Blue

Give her a lot of hugs, listen to her, and always stand up for her. Remember that being the best friend ever means just being there. ★



Illustrations: Amanda Haley

Are you a super sleuth? See if you can solve these **mini mysteries!** To read the answer at the end of each story, hold the page up to a mirror.

A Very Secret Ingredient

by Elizabeth McDavid Jones

A doodle holds the clue to the secret ingredient that makes Aunt Lu's cake so good. But what does it mean?



Melanie poked at the boxed macaroni Dad had made for dinner. Some of the macaroni was chewy; some of it was crunchy. And how had Dad managed to make it turn out green? "It's a good thing Aunt Lu's coming tonight," she said.

"Because she'll be able to help out while your mom rests?" Dad asked. Melanie's mom had broken her leg, and they had just brought her home from the hospital.

"Well…" Melanie paused and shot a look at her sister, Jennifer. She didn't want to hurt Dad's feelings.

"Nothing personal, Dad," Jennifer said, helping Melanie out, "but you're not exactly the world's best cook."

"And Thanksgiving's tomorrow," Melanie added quickly.

"We're just lucky Aunt Lu's a great cook!" Jennifer finished.

"Did I hear my name?" sang a voice from the doorway.

"Aunt Lu!" the girls shouted, jumping up from the table. "You're here!"

"I am indeed!" Aunt Lu said, holding out her arms for a hug. "And first thing tomorrow, we're going to start cooking up the best Thanksgiving dinner ever!"



Jennifer and Melanie woke in the morning to the smell of turkey roasting in the oven, and Aunt Lu had pancakes waiting for them when they came to breakfast. As soon as they had eaten, Aunt Lu took out the big yellow cake bowl. "Now," she said, "we're going to get started on my special apple cake. It's the perfect Thanksgiving dessert. You girls peel some apples while I try to figure out this recipe card." The girls quickly got to work.

"Let me see," Aunt Lu said, staring at the recipe card. "Whose handwriting is this? It's atrocious." She squinted and held the card closer. "Oh, it's mine." Then she frowned. "Mercy me, I can scarcely read this. Flour, eggs, sugar, baking soda, salt, apples. Hmmm ... it still seems as if something is missing." She scratched her head. "Girls, would you please take a look at this?"



She passed the card to Melanie and Jennifer. They looked at it carefully, then flipped it over. "What's this, Aunt Lu?" asked Melanie. "It looks like someone drew a picture on the back."

"Oh my goodness me!" Aunt Lu exclaimed, popping her forehead with her palm. "I forgot all about that! That's the secret ingredient that makes my apple cake so scrumptious."

"The secret ingredient?" Jennifer asked, peering at the card again. "But what is it?"

"What is it?" Aunt Lu repeated. "Why, it's ... you know, I can't remember!"



"It looks like a cow," said Melanie.

"An angry cow," added Jennifer.

Aunt Lu leaned over to look. "My, yes, that cow does look angry. Who drew it?" She screwed up her face. "Hmmm, guess I did. Well, I think the cow's supposed to remind me of something."

"Could an angry cow mean steamed milk?" asked Melanie.

Aunt Lu bit her lip. "No, that's not it. But I think you're on the right track by thinking of dairy products."

"Bitter butter?" suggested Jennifer.

"Bitter butter?" said Aunt Lu. "No, I don't think so."

For a while they all stared at the notecard. Then Melanie said, "Wait a minute! I know what the secret ingredient is!"

What was the secret ingredient?



Answer: Melanie figured out that Aunt Lu's angry cow was really a sour-looking cow, and the secret ingredient was sour cream!

Photos: Jamie Young Illustrations: Lauren Scheuer

The Disappearing Sweater

by Elizabeth McDavid Jones

Suzanne has a beautiful gift for Mom this year—if only she can find it.

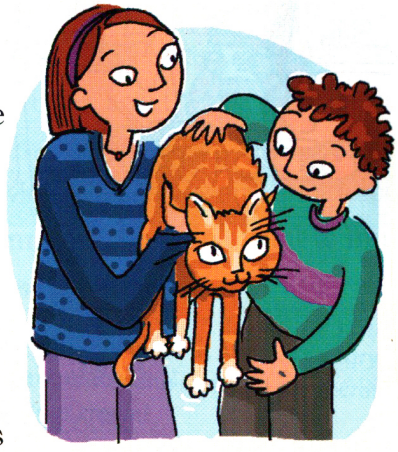


"Binks! No!" Suzanne was kneeling on her bedroom floor beside a box of her old clothes for the holiday charity drive. She dragged a large cat out of her closet.

"Meowww!" Binks complained as he clung desperately to a woolly turtleneck sweater.

"Ben, I have something for you!" Suzanne called as she carefully pulled Binks's claws from the sweater.

"An early Christmas present?" asked her brother Ben, hurrying into Suzanne's room.



"Sure, if you consider Binks a present," Suzanne said, handing Ben the cat. "Keep him out of my closet, if you don't mind. He was sleeping on Mom's Christmas present, and I don't want it to get ruined. It cost me three months of allowances."

"What're you giving her?" Ben asked, trying to look. "I promise I won't tell."

"Right," said Suzanne, blocking his view. "Like you promised to keep Binks out of my room. Yet here he is. Now, scram. Please."



When Ben was gone, Suzanne brushed cat hair off the turtleneck and held it up to admire. It was such a beautiful sweater! Mom was going to love it.

Then Mom's voice came from downstairs. "Suzanne! Teesha is here to go Christmas caroling."

"Hold on! I'll be ready in just a second," Suzanne cried. She jumped up, brushed her hair, and grabbed a neatly folded pullover from the sweater rack in her closet. As she rushed out into the hall, she nearly collided with her older sister, Jasmine, who was dashing out of the bathroom with a towel draped around her head.

"Mom," Jasmine wailed. "Help! I don't have anything to wear to the Christmas dance tonight!"



Suzanne darted around Jasmine and headed downstairs. She met Mom, who was on her way up.

"Did you finish going through your things for the charity drive?" Mom asked her.

"Yes," Suzanne said, "there's a box of stuff on my closet floor."

"Great," Mom said. "I'm taking donations to the church now." She continued upstairs, calling to Jasmine, "It doesn't matter what you wear, because you're not going anywhere until your room is clean! I mean it! Every stitch of clothing turned right-side out! And don't you dare drop that towel on the floor!"

Teesha was waiting for Suzanne at the bottom of the stairs. "Wow, your house is Chaos Central."

"As always," laughed Suzanne. "Let's go!"



On the afternoon of Christmas Eve, Teesha walked into Suzanne's room carrying a bunch of shopping bags. "I brought over my presents to wrap, like we planned." She paused. "Hey, what's wrong with you?"

Suzanne was stretched out on her bed, looking dismal. "It's terrible, Teesha. You know the turtleneck sweater I bought Mom for Christmas? It's gone, and I think Mom gave it to the charity drive by accident."

"Are you sure?" asked Teesha.

"Look for yourself," Suzanne moaned. "It was in my closet the day we went Christmas caroling, and now it's not there."

Teesha was already rummaging around in Suzanne's closet. After a couple of minutes, she turned around and held up two wrong-side-out sweaters. "Well, I found these in the very back—ick, covered with cat hair—but neither one is a turtleneck."

Suzanne, open-mouthed, was staring at her. "Teesha, you're brilliant! I think I know what happened to Mom's sweater!"

What happened to the sweater?



Answer: Binks had been in Suzanne's closet again, but Suzanne knew he hadn't carried away Mom's sweater. Cats don't do that—but sisters sometimes do! When Suzanne saw the wrong-side-out sweaters, she knew Jasmine had been going through her clothes, looking for something to wear to the dance. She had probably borrowed Mom's sweater and forgotten to return it. Sure enough, Suzanne found the turtleneck in the back of Jasmine's closet, turned wrong-side out!

Hannah's Hanukkah Visitor

by Elizabeth McDavid Jones

Hannah needed a pen and paper to solve this puzzle. You might, too!



Hannah woke up and stretched. It was the first day of winter break—no school! But when she looked out the window, she frowned. There was a huge snowstorm, with flakes flying everywhere. "Bummer!" she said. "So much for my plans for today!"

Then her brother, Michael, burst into her bedroom. "Hannah, Mom and Dad are staying home from work today because of the storm. They have a mystery for us to solve—it's a Hanukkah mystery!"

Hannah and Michael rushed downstairs. While they were eating breakfast, their parents told them about the mystery.

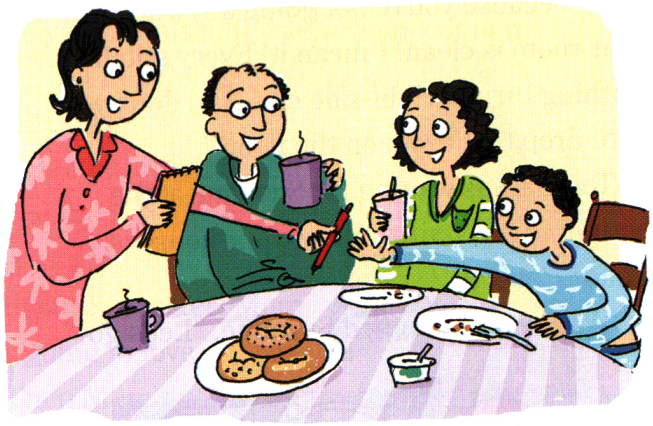
"We're going to have a special visitor for Hanukkah," Dad said.

"That must be the mystery," Hannah said, nodding excitedly.

"Yes," Mom said. "You have to figure out who the guest is from the clues your dad and I have planted throughout the house."

"All the clues have to do with Hanukkah," Dad said. "So be on the lookout for anything we use to celebrate the holiday."

"We'll be detectives!" shouted Michael.



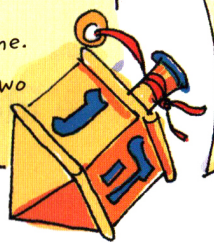
Mom laughed. "All right, sleuths. Your first clue is hidden somewhere in this room. When you find it, start looking for the next clue in another room. There are four clues total."

"Cool!" said Hannah as she and Michael jumped up and began to search the kitchen. Sticking out from between the canisters, Hannah found a dreidel with a tag attached to it. Written on the tag was this clue:

I am a DREIDEL to play with for Hanukkah.

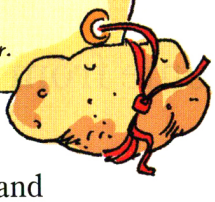
An equal number of letters you will see
for the name of the mystery person and for me.

In both our names, letters number five and two
will fill in the blanks for your first clue.

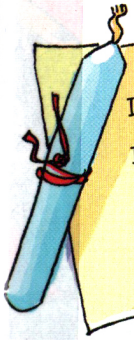


I am a POTATO to use for making latkes for Hanukkah.

You need my letter one and letter four
before your guest walks through the door.



Hannah grabbed the clue. Then they ran into the dining room. Hannah found a box of menorah candles under a place mat. On the box was a single candle, with this clue on a tag attached to it:



I am a CANDLE to put in your menorah.

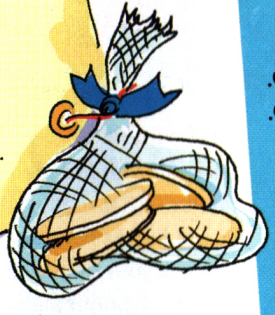
In both our names, the fourth letters from the end
are just alike. We're letter friends!

It's so easy, it's absurd.
My second letter is the mystery person's third.

"That's two clues," said Hannah. "Race you to find the third!" She beat Michael into the den, but he found the clue under a magazine on the coffee table—a bag of candy coins. On the tag was written this clue:

I am GELT to eat during Hanukkah.

My first letter is the same
as the first letter of the visitor's name.



The last clue stumped them. They searched the rest of the house and couldn't find anything else, until Hannah spotted a potato resting on a bookshelf. Attached to the potato was this clue:

With the clues gathered, Hannah and Michael went into the kitchen and spread them on the table to examine. Hannah grabbed a pad of paper and a pen and started writing. At last she said, "I've got it! I know who the Hanukkah visitor will be!

Who is the visitor?



Answer: The mystery person was GRANDPA! Here's how Hannah and Michael figured it out:

Each clue told them something about the name of the Hanukkah visitor.

From DREIDEL,
Clue #1: Dreidel has 7 letters. So did the visitor's name.
Clue #2: In Dreidel, the 2nd letter is R and the fifth letter is D.
So the 2nd and 5th letters in the visitor's name were R and D.
So far they had this: _ R _ _ D _ _.

From CANDLE,
Clue #3: The visitor's 4th letter from the end was N.
Clue #4: The 2nd letter of CANDLE was the visitor's third letter, A.
Now they had this: _ R A N D _ _.

From GELT,
Clue #5: The first letter was G.
So they had G R A N D _ _.

All they had left were the last two letters. They got those from POTATO.
Clue #6: Letters 1 and 4 were P and A, which gave them GRANDPA! ★

Feel Better!

by Shannon Payette Seip

Home from school and feeling sick? These ideas will do the trick!



Do the 'Do

Pick the hippest hairstyle you see in a magazine and try to create it on your own head. Don't worry if it doesn't turn out—no one will see you anyway.

Funny Business

Read a joke book and get grinning. Research shows that when you smile, your body releases chemicals that make you feel good. Even better, call your friends after school's out and tell them jokes.

Think Drink

Make sure you get plenty of fluids—that really will help you get better. For a sparkling treat, mix your fruit juice with a splash of ginger ale.

Citrus Cubes

Soothe your throat with these citrus cubes. Fill an ice-cube tray with orange juice, and place the tray in the freezer. Use the cubes to bring a fruity twist to water or lemon-lime soda, or just suck on them to ease your sore throat.

It's okay to cuddle with your cat or dog. They can't catch your cold.

Nice Nails

Paint your toenails with a cool, creative design—being home sick gives you lots of drying time. You can even do your fingernails to match.

A Day at the Spa

Pretend you're at a spa. Take a luxurious bubble bath, and use yummy-smelling lotion afterward. Wear a headband to keep your hair out of your face, put on fuzzy socks, and listen to relaxing music. You'll feel better fast!

Play House

Design your dream house. Cut out pictures of furniture and rooms from magazines or catalogs. Make a room-by-room scrapbook with a different page for each room.

Move In

Now that you have your dream house, move in! Create a fantasy family or group of girlfriends to share it with you. Cut out pictures of what they would look like and the cool clothes they would wear. You could even write little profiles of them—include their names, hobbies, and what their lives are like.





Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

Brainwaves

activities and puzzles

Let It Snow

Find your way home through this snowstorm. Move from snowflake to snowflake—up, down, left, or right. Here's the catch: you can move from one snowflake to the next only if the snowflakes are the **same color** or the **same shape.**





Start



Finish

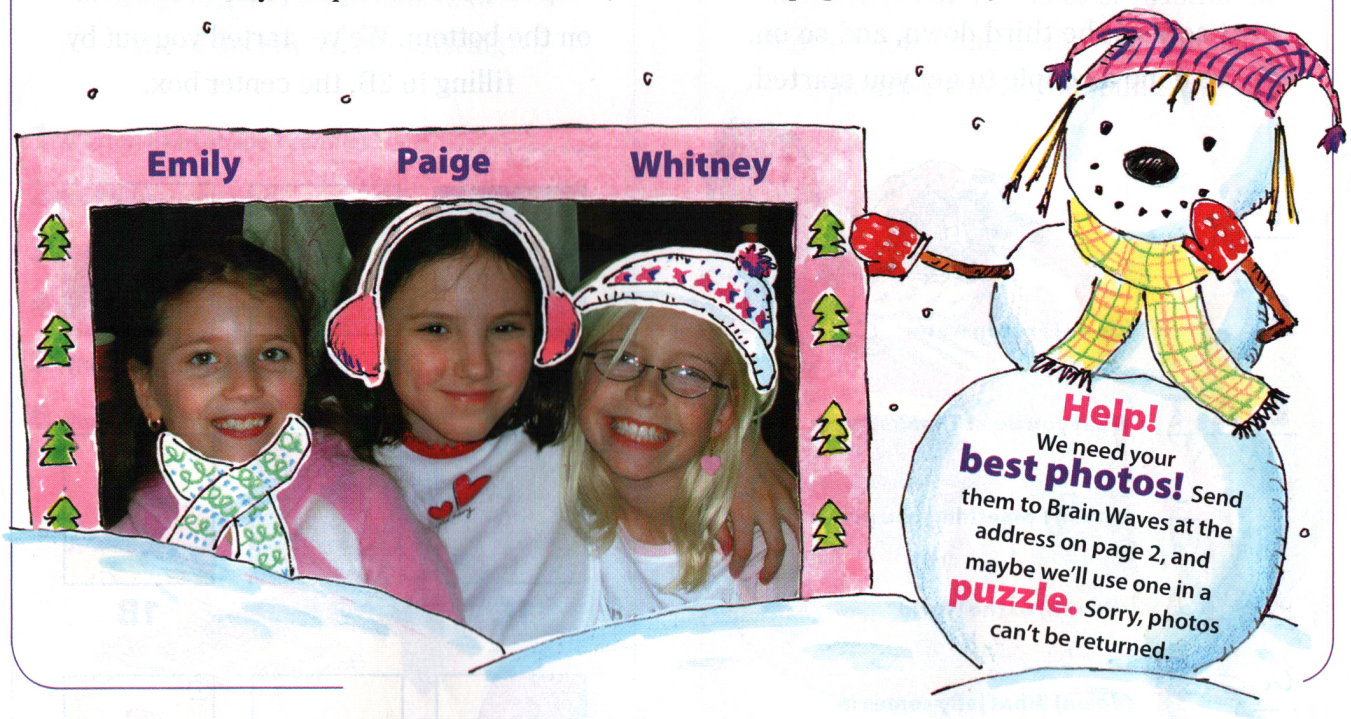






Photo Fun

Ohio girls Emily H., Paige M., and Whitney F., all age 10, sent us this photo. Study the photo for one minute, then turn to page 43 to test your memory!



Help! We need your **best photos!** Send them to Brain Waves at the address on page 2, and maybe we'll use one in a **puzzle.** Sorry, photos can't be returned.

Let's Eat!

Decode these rebus clues to make a tasty Thanksgiving dinner.



Great Skate

Skate your way down the answers to these clues! The first answer goes down, the next across, the third down, and so on. We've done a couple to get you started.



I
C — (down) Frozen water

E A T — What you do at Thanksgiving

o — (down) Something you play with

J o y — "(blank) to the World"

a — (down) What jelly comes in

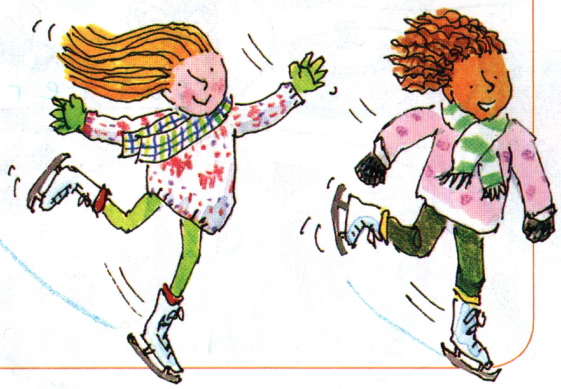
r e d — The color of Santa's suit

o — (down) A furry pet

f o g — What Rudolph led the sleigh through

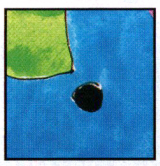
u — (down) A good time

n e w — "Happy (blank) Year!"



Picture Puzzle

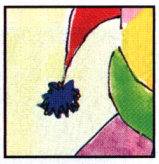
Copy the drawing from each box on the top into the matching place in the grid on the bottom. We've started you out by filling in 2B, the center box.



3B



2C



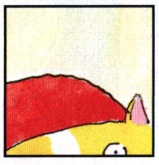
2A



1C



3A



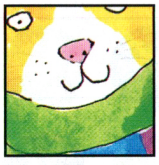
1B



3C

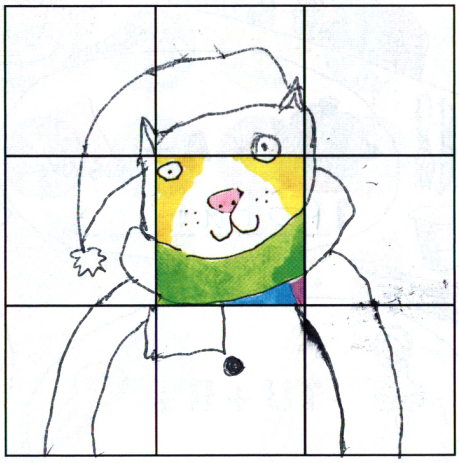


1A



2B

1
2
3



A B C

Photo Fun Questions

After you've studied the photo on page 41, see if you can answer these questions. No peeking!

1 Who has heart-shaped earrings? Whitney

2 Who is wearing a scarf? Emily

3 Who is smiling without showing her teeth? Paige

4 Who is wearing gold earrings? Emily

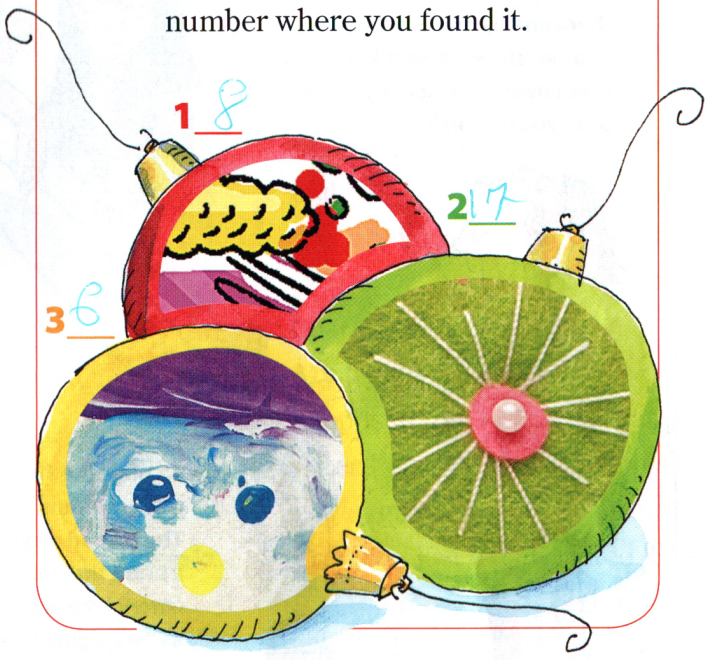
5 Who is wearing glasses? Whitney

6 Who is wearing earmuffs? Paige



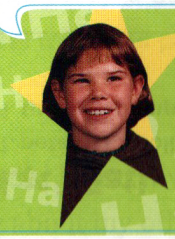
Art Sleuth

Search the pages of this issue to find where each snippet of the photo or illustration shown below came from. Write the page number where you found it.



Laffateria

How does Jack Frost get around?



He rides his icicle.

Corey S.
Age ~~11~~, Michigan

Where does Santa go for vacation?



Club Sled

Jen M.
Age 15, New Hampshire

Why did the cookie go to the hospital?



He was feeling a little crumby!

Kelly G.
Age ~~12~~, California

What do you call a freight train carrying a load of bubble gum?



A chew-chew train

Michelle W.
Age 10, Connecticut

What did the iceberg say to his friend?

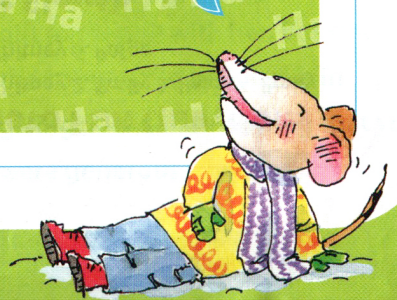


Ice to see you.

Alyssa R.
Age ~~8~~, Illinois

Funny Business

Send your best joke to Brain Waves! Write to the address on page 2. Include your name, birth date, school photo, and signature.



Can You Do It?

Try these holiday challenges!

Christmas Stacking

Grab a pile of holiday cards. Stack them one by one. See how many you can stack without knocking them over, then see if you can beat your record!





Happy Holidaze

One player sits on a chair with the other two players standing on either side. On "go," both standing players start whispering in the sitting player's ears. They should tell made-up holiday stories—the crazier, the better! After listening to gobbledygook for 30 seconds, the sitting player tries to retell as much of each story as she can.



Wacky Wish List

To play, the first player writes down a noun, such as "oboe." The second player writes down a noun that *starts with the last letter* of the previous item, such as "elephant." Keep taking turns. See how long you can go without repeating words!



Answer Box

Let It Snow



Let's Eat!

1. potatoes 2. rolls 3. butter 4. turkey 5. pumpkin pie

Great Skate

The answers in order from top to bottom are: ice, eat, toy, joy, jar, red, dog, fog, fun, new

Picture Puzzle

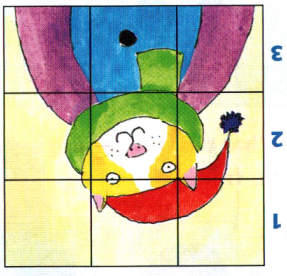


Photo Fun Questions

1. Whitney 2. Emily 3. Paige 4. Emily 5. Whitney 6. Paige

Art Sleuth

1. page 8; 2. page 17; 3. page 6

Buzzword

Gobbledygook appears on this page (page 44)!


Sweet Dreams
American Girl
Photo: Amos Nachoum/Getty Images

SANTA PAWS



American Girl™

Photo: Pat Powers & Cheryl Schafer/Photodisc Green/Getty Images

HELP!



Dear *American Girl,*

I always get a big puffy winter jacket and big puffy gloves. I look like a marshmallow. I hate it, but my mom and dad say I'm warm and it doesn't matter what I look like.

big marshmallow

Your parents are right—staying warm is more important than looking cool. Can you compromise and find a jacket you all like? If not, maybe you can also get a less bulky coat and gloves for days that aren't as chilly. If you offer to chip in some of your own money, your parents may let you get things you like better than your puffy stuff.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

At school I heard my friends talking about my other friend. I don't know if I should tell her or not. Should I?

don't know

Keep your lips zipped. Don't tell your friend unless you want to get in the middle of a big fight. If you tell her, she'll get mad at your other friends for gossiping about her, and then *they'll* get mad at *you* for telling in the first place. Was the gossip about something specific (and annoying) that your friend does? If so, you could try gently suggesting that she stop doing it without letting her know about the gossip.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I have two teenage sisters and my mom as a family. But the problem is that my sisters are always going everywhere and I never get to spend time with my whole family! What should I do?

Family Problems!

Talk to your mom and see if you can pick one night a week to be "family night." You could play games, watch movies, go for a walk, or just have dinner together. Taking turns choosing what to do for family night makes it more fun for everyone. And on the other nights? Focus on the fact that you get to have Mom all to yourself!

★

Dear *American Girl,*

My best friend and I were supposed to do a gift exchange. After I gave her my present she never gave me one. I am not greedy—just disappointed. She has the money. How long should I wait?

Still Waiting

Since you had plans to give each other gifts, it's natural that you feel disappointed. If she didn't offer any explanation, you probably won't be getting a present. Think about your friendship with this girl. Is she usually reliable? Do you feel good after spending time with her? Is she generous with you at other times? If so, just let this go. Bringing the subject up now could be awkward, and she probably feels embarrassed about it. Next year, think twice about planning a gift exchange with her. But since the spirit of the holidays is in giving, feel good knowing that *you* were generous.

Illustrations: Laura Cornell

MORE HELP!



Dear *American Girl,*

I got the solo in a Christmas play. I'm really good at my part, but I'm scared. I'm afraid that I'll mess up in front of everyone. What should I do?

Scaredy Cat

You will do a wonderful job if you practice, practice, practice. Instead of picturing yourself messing up, imagine yourself giving a great performance. To relax right before you go onstage, take deep breaths and shake your arms. When you're onstage, focus on the story you're telling. You know you're good at your part, and so does the director—otherwise she wouldn't have chosen you!

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I hate it when people think I am a twin of my sister. She is only in first grade and I am in fourth. Because she is so tall, people think we're twins. I wish she would shrink.

a little big sister

There's not much you can do about your size—or your sister's. Instead of getting so angry, try to have a sense of humor. When people ask if you're twins, say, "Yes, but I was born three years earlier," or, "No, she's my stunt double." Also, focus on all the things that make you special that you're really proud of. Realize that your little sister probably looks up to you, even though you are the same size. That should make you feel better!

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I have braces and I always want to eat candy that I'm not allowed to have! I absolutely love sticky candy. It's so tempting to eat some when everyone else is. What can I do to keep my mind off of sticky candy?

Tempted

Having to miss out on food you like is a bummer, but you won't have braces forever. When the candy comes out, try one of these ideas: Get a calendar and count how many months are left until your braces come off. Make a list of all the forbidden foods you'll eat again someday. Try new kinds of food that you might not have tried before—you might find something you like. And most important of all: Make sure you always have something with you that you *are* allowed to snack on. Remember that if you take good care of your braces, your reward will be a bright, shining smile.

★

Advice from You

"If you've lost a loved one, don't feel guilty about times when you feel happy. You know they would want you to be happy."

Breanna S.
Age 14, California

Need advice? Got advice? Write:

Help!
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



We had a hard time deciding which cover we liked the best. Do you agree with our choice? Go to americangirl.com and click on "Magazine" to vote for your favorite shot.

AG's Wacky Wish List

We played the Wacky Wish List game from Brain Waves and came up with a list of ways you can contribute to *American Girl*!

1. Send us a question for "HELP!"
2. Please enter our Cover Contest.
3. Tell us your favorite thing about being a girl for "Heart to Heart."
4. Tickle our funny bones by sending in your best jokes.
5. Send us letters all year long. Hearing from you is the best gift of all!

Behind the Scenes

A jam-packed issue is our gift to you. Happy Holidays from *AG*.



During our last cover contest in 2003, we received more than 6,800 entries. Let's beat that record for the 2006 contest! Send in your idea today.



Use our "Winter Wonderland" projects to do something nice in your community. Remember to write to us and tell us what you did!

Dear American Girl,

I was so inspired by your "Wrap & Roll" project last year that I got a group of friends together and we made more than 100 "Wrap & Roll" gifts. We passed them out at a special needs school. We stuffed them with candy, hair ties for the girls, and cars for the little boys. They were so happy to get these because they don't get a lot of presents at Christmastime. We felt so happy that we were able to bring joy to others.

Carissa H.
Age 10, New York



Rachel M., age 7, tested the "Merry Clip-mas" craft. We think she did a great job!

Go Bananas!

You'll be wild about our monkey party!



Puppy Palaces

See the amazing winners of our design-a-pet-home contest!

American Girl™



For more fun, go to americangirl.com and click on "Magazine." Play mini games and take a quiz!

Coming up in the January/February issue

Fuzzy Friends

Tips on being kind to animals, big and small

It's Our All-Animal Issue!

From the front cover to the back, we'll put an animal on every page.

Mini Zoo

Make a bunch of the cutest little animal crafts ever!



I ♥ Ewe

Animal valentines you can clip and give

Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

AG's Holiday Stickers

Use these stickers to brighten up your things this holiday season! Read the tips on the back to get ideas on clever ways to use them.

Wish Upon a Star

Love

Sparkle

Star

Celebrate

Dream

Peace

Hugs & Kisses

Let It Snow

Season's Greetings

Shine

Celebrate

Happy Holidays

Joy

Sing

Illustrations: Beth Griffis Johnson

			B	B	C	C	D
D	E	E	E			G	G
H	H	I	I	I	J	J	
	L	L			N	N	N
		O	P	P	P	Q	Q
		S					U
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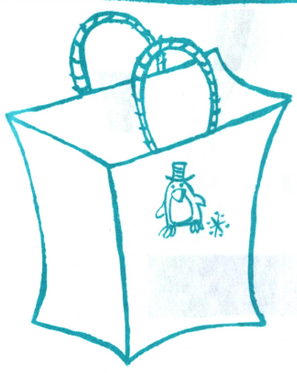
5 Ways to Use These Stickers...



1. Wrap a present in plain wrapping paper. Place the stickers on the paper to decorate.

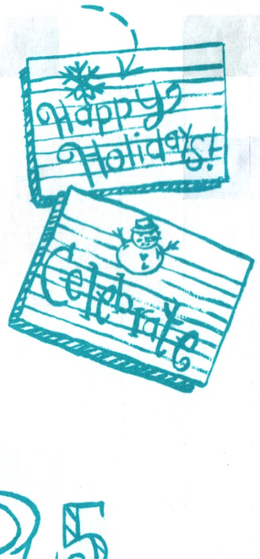


2. Add a cute touch to your notebook by placing some stickers on the cover.



3. Decorate a small gift bag with the stickers.

4. Place stickers on an index card. Use a colored marker to write a favorite family holiday recipe on the back.





5. Place the stickers on a clear glass candle holder and give as a gift to your teacher.